

Comparison of Early Intervention (EI, Part C of IDEA) and Preschool Special Education Services (Part B of IDEA)

The following “side by side comparison” is intended to assist families and others in understanding the similarities, as well as some differences between **Part C Early Intervention Services** and **Part B Preschool Special Education Services**.

	Early Intervention (EI)	Preschool Special Education
Governing Federal Laws	Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).	Part B Section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).
Ages Served	Birth through third birthday.	Three through five years, unless identified under a birth mandate classification, which includes autism, deaf/blind, hearing impairment, and visual impairment, including blindness.
Evaluation	A multidisciplinary team completes a developmental evaluation of all five areas of development, including adaptive, (self- help) cognitive, communication, physical, and social emotional development.	Appropriately licensed professionals review current information about the child and determine whether further information / testing is needed to determine if the child is eligible for preschool special education. If needed, further evaluation will be provided.
Eligibility	A child must have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a significant delay in development OR a child must demonstrate a significant level of developmental delay in one or more areas of development.	A child is found eligible based on the determination of a disability or condition which prevents the child from receiving reasonable benefit from general education without additional supports.
Family Involvement	Parent(s) must be involved in the development of the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) and are members of the IFSP team.	Parent(s) must be members of the Individual Education Program (IEP) team which include the evaluation, eligibility determination, and IEP development, as well as making decisions about the education of their child.
Implementation of Plan	Each eligible infant or toddler and their family is assigned a service coordinator who coordinates services and assists the family throughout their involvement in the EI system	A case manager may assigned to each child with an IEP.
Type of Plan	An IFSP documents the family’s desired outcomes for their child, as well as the supports and services to be provided. IFSPs are reviewed at least every six months with the family, service coordinator, and EI provider(s) and rewritten annually	An IEP documents the child’s educational goals, services, and placement; the IEP also describes how progress will be measured. IEPs are revised as needed, and are rewritten annually.
Services	EI services support the family’s ability to help their child learn and develop	Special education is an educational service that is instructional in nature. Related services (for example OT, PT, transportation) are provided

		when they are needed in order for a child with a disability to access learning; all services listed in an IEP are the responsibility of the local school district.
Delivery of Services	Natural Environments – EI services are provided in places where infants and toddlers without disabilities participate, such as the child’s home, child care setting, or in other areas in the community. Their family and child’s everyday routines of the day are used as natural opportunities for learning.	Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities and/or special learning needs are educated with children who are nondisabled. Special classes, schooling or other removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
Cost of Services	Services are paid by Part C, or with parental consent, private insurance or Medicaid.	Special education and related services are provided at no cost to parent and within a “Free and Appropriate Public Education” (FAPE).
Recipient of Services	Recipients of supports and services may be the Infant/toddler and the child’s family.	Special education and related services are provided to the child or on behalf of the child.
Procedural Safeguards and Dispute Resolution	A copy is available from the child’s service coordinator.	A copy of this document will be provided to the family by school district prior to evaluation to determine eligibility for preschool special education service or can be obtained by going to http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/ title14/900/926.pdf
Transition	An IFSP meeting is held to develop a Transition Plan for every child between the time the child turns two years three months and two years nine months. The local school district will be notified if the child is potentially eligible for preschool special education services. A transition conference is held for each child at least 90 days prior to the child’s third birthday, and as early as nine months before the child’s third birthday. The transition conference will include a representative from the child’s school district.	Once a child is no longer eligible, families are referred to Delaware 2-1-1 Help Me Grow for available services and resources.